



Snowbound

It was several years ago on two cold February days that southern California experienced an unusual snowstorm. For the first time in about thirty years, residents of the Los Angeles basin awoke to snow. It had been eight years since north Los Angeles County (Lancaster/Palmdale) had a major snowfall.

I didn't mind being "housebound" because it provided an opportunity to spend more time exploring my Roots 3 genealogy software program. Like shoveling snow, a lot of energy

history in book form! The elaborate features prompted my purchase, but I truly wasn't aware that the program would automatically print in register form.

As I marveled, it occurred to me, "We can't do the job if we don't have the tools." We can't remove snow if we don't have a shovel. We can't print a professional family history with public domain software.

I know wherewith I speak! I have been using a R-E-M-A-R-K-A-B-L-Y G-O-O-D public domain/shareware

went into keyboarding family names into the computer. I made some entry errors so a number of hours were spent correcting data. Similarly, a person will shovel out a driveway only to have a fresh snowfall obliterate his labor.

With over 300 names in the program, it was time to experiment with printing the data. Usually I have "a gift for words," but I haven't enough adjectives to describe my excitement when Roots 3 printed my (limited) family

program for two-and-one-half years. I've bragged on it; I've given away over one hundred copies! In excess of 5,500 family names were lovingly documented with two family history books in mind. As much as I love the program, it has its limitations. It would have been necessary to "cut and paste" a manuscript from two or more computer programs.

Back to my former illustration about tools: Heavy-duty equipment was necessary—a broom would not clear away six inches of snow. Genealogy software programs are a marvelous tool. (I wonder how researchers manage/managed without a computer!)

Evaluate your needs. Are you interested in organizing your family history for personal satisfaction and immediate family? Do you plan to publish and market your family history? If you do not have grandiose plans, contact me about "free" genealogy software (for IBM and compatibles). Write to Commsoft, 2257 Old Middlefield Way, Mountain View, CA 94043, for information about their outstanding line of Roots software for most computer operating systems.

As I mentioned in an earlier article, my recommendation(s) come from personal satisfaction. No one asked me to critique or evaluate. The snowfall in usually temperate southern California provided the theme for this allegory.

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